

WHAT IS APHASIA?

Aphasia is an impairment of language, affecting the production or comprehension of speech and the ability to read or write. Aphasia is always due to injury to the brain most commonly from a stroke, particularly in older individuals. Brain injuries resulting in aphasia may also arise from head trauma, from brain tumors, or from infections.

Aphasia can be so severe as to make communication with the patient almost impossible, or it can be very mild. It may affect mainly a single aspect of language use, such as the ability to retrieve the names of objects, or the ability to put words together into sentences, or the ability to read. More commonly, however, multiple aspects of communication are impaired, while some channels remain accessible for a limited exchange of information.

It is the job of the health professional to determine the amount of function available in each of the channels for the comprehension of language, and to assess the possibility that treatment might enhance the use of the channels that are available.



TYPES OF APHASIA



This is the most severe form of aphasia, and is applied to patients who can produce few recognizable words and understand little or no spoken language. Persons with Global Aphasia can neither read nor write. Global aphasia may often be seen immediately after the patient has suffered a stroke and it may rapidly improve if the damage has not been too extensive. However, with greater brain damage, severe and lasting disability may result.

In this form of aphasia, speech output is severely reduced and is limited mainly to short utterances of less than four words. Vocabulary access is limited and the formation of sounds by persons with Broca's aphasia is often laborious and clumsy. The person may understand speech relatively well and be able to read, but be limited in writing. Broca's aphasia is often referred to as a 'non fluent aphasia' because of the halting and effortful quality of speech.

This term is applied to patients who have sparse and effortful speech, resembling severe Broca's aphasia. However, unlike persons with Broca's aphasia, they remain limited in their comprehension of speech and do not read or write beyond an elementary level.

In this form of aphasia the ability to grasp the meaning of spoken words is chiefly impaired, while the ease of producing connected speech is not much affected. Therefore Wernicke's aphasia is referred to as a 'fluent aphasia.' However, speech is far from normal. Sentences do not hang together and irrelevant words intrude-sometimes to the point of jargon, in severe cases. Reading and writing are often severely impaired.

This term is applied to persons who are left with a persistent inability to supply the words for the very things they want to talk about particularly the significant nouns and verbs. As a result their speech, while fluent in grammatical form and output is full of vague circumlocutions and expressions of frustration. They understand speech well, and in most cases, read adequately. Difficulty finding words is as evident in writing as in speech.

aphasia

COMMUNICATING
THROUGH THE BARRIERS.

What is Aphasia?

Aphasia is a language disorder that affects the ability to communicate. It's most often caused by injury to parts of the brain that control speech and language resulting from a stroke.

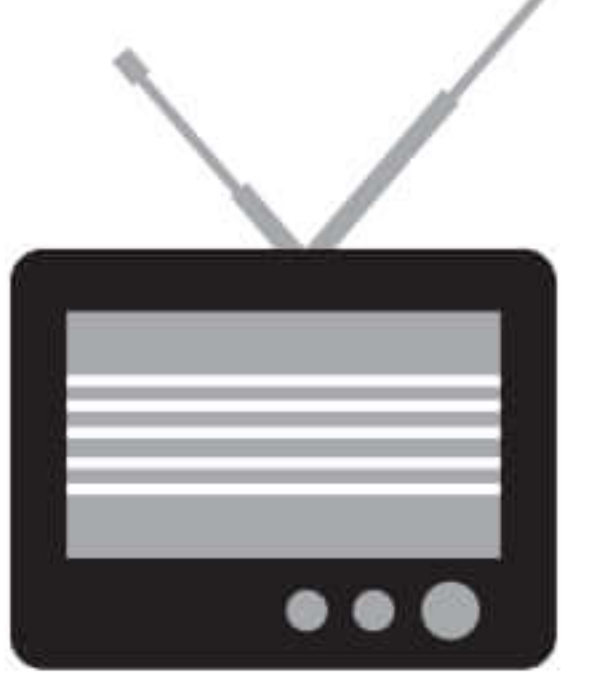
I need to communicate with someone who has aphasia.



Keep It Simple
Speak in short, simple sentences.



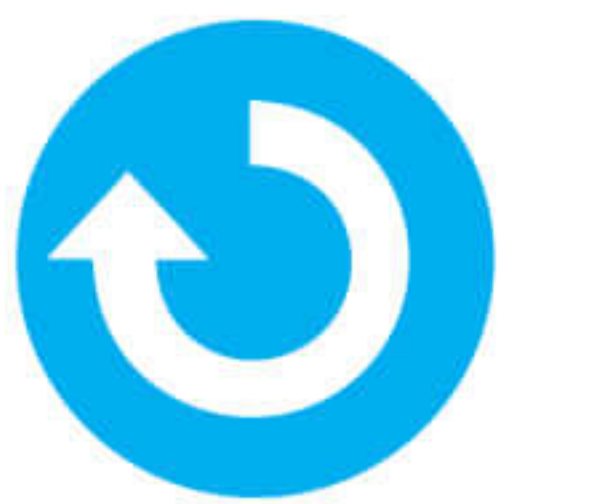
Be Patient
Allow plenty of time for a response. Talk *with* him/her not *for* him/her.



Remove Distractions
Turn off radios and TVs.



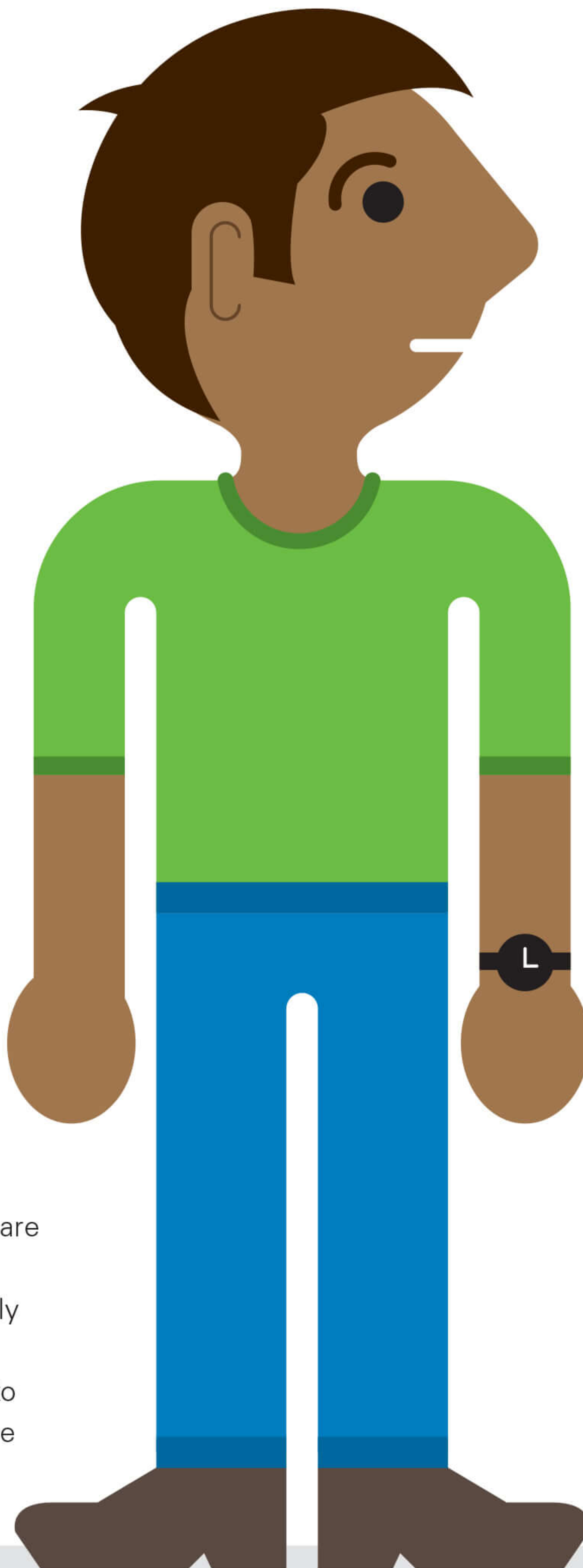
Be Creative
Try writing, gesturing, pictures and communication tools like an iPad.



Confirm
Repeat back what you think he/she is saying.

People With Aphasia

1. Communicate differently, but they are as smart as they were before.
2. Their hearing is fine; speaking loudly does not help.
3. Aphasia is not contagious! To talk to people with aphasia, you'll just have to communicate differently.



I have aphasia.



Take Your Time
Remember it may take a while to get the words out.



Let People Know What Works Best For You
Do you want a question asked in multiple ways? Let them know.



Use Assistive Devices
Bring photos, diagrams, pen and paper, etc.



Getting Frustrated Is Okay
Don't blame yourself if you get stuck or stumble on your words. Be patient with yourself as you find what works.

If You Get Stuck, You Can

1. Admit you're struggling.
2. Recap what you have discussed so far.
3. Decide whether to carry on or come back to it later.